

March 7, 2017

The Honorable Marlene Anielski, Chair
Ohio House State & Local Government Committee
Statehouse
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chair Anielski:

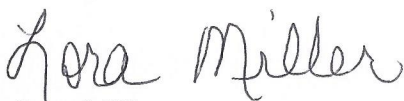
On behalf of the food service operations and retail food establishments that are members of the Ohio Council of Retail Merchants, I wish to offer our support for House Bill 65 sponsored by Representative Brian Hill. We appreciate his leadership on this important issue and we appreciate the committee's thoughtful consideration.

Be assured that our members take the issue of food safety very seriously. Most of our members in this industry are chains or are operating under franchise agreements. As such, food safety standards and protocols are set at the corporate level and are required to be met or exceeded. The corporation also requires that individual state regulations are incorporated into their training and protocols. In most cases, the companies do their own inspections of individual locations to ensure that food safety standards are being met. This is critical to ensuring the health of their customers as well as protecting the company brand.

We do understand that despite all that, there needs to be checks and balances to protect the welfare of all Ohioans and that's where inspections by local health departments come into play. We do not, however, understand what public health goal is accomplished by requiring registered sanitarians to formally cite establishments for every single non-critical violation that is unrelated to food safety. Our members do their best to work cooperatively with their health inspectors and as a result, mutual respect and rapport are established. Should the inspectors be required to issue a lengthy laundry list of non-critical violations that unnecessarily overwhelm and frustrate the operator, the respect and rapport would be shattered, creating an adversarial scenario that benefits no one.

House Bill 65 proposes reasonable standards that maintain the integrity of food safety inspections and at the same time allows registered sanitarians to use their professional judgment when executing those inspections. As such, we fully support enactment of House Bill 65. Thank you in advance for your support for this measure.

Sincerely,



Lora Miller
Director of Governmental Affairs & Public Relations